

About The Data

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A KHN analysis of nursing home payroll records recently released by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) reveals wide fluctuations in nursing home staffing. [CMS' Payroll-Based Journal](#) (PBJ) data file shows each facility's staffing hours and number of residents (known as the census) for the first three months of 2018. CMS has used this data source since April 2018 to rate nursing facility staffing on Medicare's [Nursing Home Compare](#) website. KHN created its own data set showing the average number of residents that each nurse and aide must care for on the best- and worst-staffed days at more than 14,000 skilled nursing facilities. It also shows how Medicare rates overall staffing and registered nurse staffing by facility. The full methodology for this analysis is included in this download.

How To Use The Data

You can compare facilities using the “Total staffing rating” and “Registered Nurse (RN) staffing rating” criteria. These are determined by Medicare, which accounts for the mix of residents — so, a facility with more residents who have severe needs can be fairly compared to a facility with a more independent population.

You can examine variation in staffing *within* each facility by looking at the residents per nurse and residents per aide on the best- and worst-staffed-day ratios, which were calculated by KHN. You should *not* compare highest- and lowest-staffing levels between facilities, because these are actual staffing levels as reported by facilities and do not take into account that some facilities have residents with greater needs than others.

How KHN Can Help Other Journalists

We encourage other news organizations and publications to reuse our data and stories for free. If you want to republish — also for free — our story about nursing staffing levels that is based on the data, you can find out how to here: <https://khn.org/syndication/>

We also can offer guidance as you put together your story. We can pull out of the data just those nursing facilities from the cities or states you are interested in. We are happy to answer questions you have about the data or what you think it means. You can email KHN senior correspondent Jordan Rau at jrau@kff.org or email KHN data editor Elizabeth Lucas at elucas@kff.org.